



U.S. Forest Service
Modoc National Forest
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Fire Conditions across the Modoc

ALTURAS, Calif., July 7, 2014 – The Predictive Services Group in the North Zone Coordination Center in Redding, Calif. says ***Above Normal Large Fire Potential*** is forecast to continue across the entire region in July. The Group adds that the particularly dry and warm conditions of April thru June have produced dry fuels that are more typical of August and that extreme drought continues across northeastern California.

In fact, the Modoc National Forest is setting new records this year for energy release components or ERCs. The ERC is a National Fire Danger Rating System index related to how hot a fire could burn. The ERC can serve as a good characterization of fire season as it tracks seasonal fire danger trends well. The Forest is currently at a Very High fire danger level.

With the prediction for July, any significant lightning or wind event could produce numerous large fires as recently experienced with the Modoc July Lightning Complex and the Gulch Fire. The current National Weather Service forecast includes the possibility of lightning returning to the area. In preparation, the Modoc has ordered additional resources to help support the Forest's response to any new fires.

The recent fire activity on the Modoc shows the critical conditions that are in place. Fire behavior on these incidents was severe and the Gulch Incident Commander described it as more typical for mid-August, not July. During initial attack on the Gulch Fire, a rapid rate of spread was observed as shown in the photo attached – taken on the Gulch Fire, July 3 at 9:45 p.m. – in addition to a backing fire up to six feet high throughout the night.

According to Dave McMaster, Modoc National Forest Fire Management Officer, "We are facing significant challenges as we engage on wildfires in these extreme conditions. Our firefighters and cooperators are doing a great job responding quickly, working hard to suppress these fires and keeping them as small as possible."

The public needs to understand the current conditions and know that there is the potential for all fires to become large, very fast. Everyone has a responsibility to help prevent human-caused wildfires. Remember, One Less Spark means One Less Wildfire. www.preventwildfireca.org/OneLessSpark/

Furthermore, individuals are responsible for preparing their homes from the risk of wildfire. Learn more about creating defensible space, landscaping and making neighborhoods safer from fire by visiting <http://www.firewise.org>.

During fire season, if you would like to receive text messages about fire activity on the Modoc National Forest, contact Punky Moore, Public Affairs Officer at 530-233-8713 or by email sjmoore@fs.fed.us.

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